

FINAL

Bush River Community Council

September 19, 2011 Meeting Minutes

The fifth meeting of the Bush River Community Council (BRCC) was called to order by the Vice Chairman, Larry Carmichael, at 6:35 p.m. in the Anita C. Light Estuary Center meeting room, Otter Point Road, Abingdon, MD, on September 19, 2011. Maryland Senator Nancy Jacobs; Captain Christopher Swain, Harford County Sheriff's Office; Patricia Gonzalez, Office of County Executive; Denise Lynch, Department of Planning and Zoning; Pat Pudelkewicz and Bryan Lightner, County Environmental Office; and Kriste Carman, Anita C. Leight EC Park Manager were present. Bush River Community Council Board members in attendance were Vice Chair Larry Carmichael, Randy Conlon, Kathleen Leary and Mary Starks. Chairman John Paff, Harry Webster, JoWanda Lucas, Glenn Dudderar, and Carolyn Shea were absent. Five members of the Bush River community and a representative from the Aegis attended.

Vice Chair Carmichael opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for coming. A concern was raised regarding possibly insufficient, timely notification of the meeting for the public since attendance was down especially after a two month meeting hiatus for this council. A question was asked if our meetings were listed in the Aegis under upcoming events. It has not been included, but is posted on the Harford County government web site and should be on the councils Facebook page.

Senator Jacobs responded to questions about what fees/taxes may be raised by indicating that virtually all are on the table for the January session. She explained the revisions to the state proposed toll increases which she worked hard to reverse. Revisions are primarily lower cost and delays in implementation of full cost of an increase to raise state revenue.

Ms Denise Lynch provided a heads up to the council regarding a new county volunteer program designed to reduce the proliferation of advertising signs at busy intersections throughout the county. While Maryland State currently has a program with fines imposed, Harford County has developed its own program without fines, but with letters of notification and confiscation of the illegal signs. They will have a press release soon and request volunteers to sign up to remove advertising signs at specified intersections within the right of way – no signs will be taken from private property and this does not include permitted signs or political signs. Volunteers will remove the illegal signs from their assigned areas, annotate and turn in to the county phone numbers from the signs, and deliver the signs to recycling bins near Annie's Playground.

Captain Swain informed the council that a new computer software system is being implemented in the Harford County Sheriff's office and because the reporting piece of the software is not yet available, he did not have a local crime report for us at this meeting. In answer to a query, he suggested to us that we can continue to use CrimeReports.com to access more detailed crime statistics for individual neighborhoods. A concern was raised about perceived increase in school crime. He said the rate of occurrences is about the same, there may be a more focused reporting as the school year begins.

Ms Pat Pudelkewicz introduced the topic of Rules for Managing the Critical Area: up to 1,000 feet back from the tidal water's edge and the Buffer area: up to 100 feet from the tidal water's edge within the critical area. Mr. Bryan Lightner presented a briefing on the Harford County Critical Area

Management Program and provided the web site for the document. Attached is a copy of the detailed program from that web site.

Bush River water front homeowners residing in the buffer zone received a letter in April briefly reminding them of the regulatory requirements of maintaining the buffer zone and the remainder of the critical area. There were insufficient funds at that time to send the letter to all residents within the 1,000 feet critical area surrounding the river.

A concern was raised regarding a requirement of waterfront homeowners to maintain the quality of the water. During the recent flooding, as reported by the Aegis, a sewage treatment facility in Edgewood overflowed into the Bush River. A resident from Long Bar Harbor indicated that a number of dead catfish has floated up on the shore. Another comment was made that Sod Run overflows from time to time as well. Concern was raised about assuring that the county/state governments are maintaining the integrity of the sewage treatment plants in the Bush River Community that service areas as far away as Bel Air and points north as well as locally. At a previous meeting of the council we were informed by the representative of the Harford County Department of Water and Sewer the all waste treatment plants are monitored continually, reported on and no bacteria emission is acceptable. Should there ever be a bacterial emission, letters would be sent to all residents on Bush River. No one received such a letter regarding this instance of sewage overflow and no information about clean up actions has been provided. A question was raised about septic tank overflows and representatives indicated there is a state program which, if funded, will provide homeowners assistance of up to 75% of the \$10,000 - \$13,000 estimated cost associated with replacing septic systems with county sewage line hookups.

Several questions were addressed regarding when to contact the county prior to removing dead trees or live trees threatening to fall and damage property and how much pruning of live trees is permissible (not more than 1/3 of the tree should be removed in order to maintain the health of the tree). Also, types of trees to replace those removed must conform to the county list of trees most appropriate for planting in this area. If the type tree is not approved by the county, it does not count toward the 1:1 or 2:1 ratio of replanting required. If residents have any questions about specific situations, they should contact Bryan Lightner at bclightner@harfordcountymd.gov.

The Vice Chairman thanked everyone for coming and adjourned the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Two questions were raised for discussion at the next meeting:

1. Should the BRCC join the County's sign program in lieu of sponsoring a public park?
2. Should the BRCC plan to meet 12 months of the year instead of having a summer hiatus.

Submitted by:

Mary Starks

Secretary

Bush River Community Council

